(b) whether the Government have conducted any inquiry against them; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) There are twenty three (23) retail outlet dealerships in Darbhanga district in Bihar. A complaint against one dealer has been received by the concerned oil company. On investigation, it was found that the dealer was overcharging the customers. Suitable penal action of suspension of supplies for fifteen days, a fine of Rs. 2,000/- and a warning latter as provided under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines, has been taken against the erring dealer.

[English]

Bridge on N.H. 47

1849. SHRI N. DENNIS : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken by the Government for the replacement of the old bridge across the Kuzhithurai river on the Kanyakumari-Trivandrum N.H. 47; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) The work for reconstruction of bridge across Kuzhithurai river on NH-47 (Kanyakumari-Trivandrum Section of Tamil Nadu) has been included in the Annual Plan 1997-98 at an estimated cost of Rs. 4.00 Crore.

External Commercial Borrowing for Airbus and Boeings

1850. SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering for an external commercial borrowing to meet the cost of proposed airbus and boeing aircraft;

(b) if so, the terms and conditions of such loan; and

(c) the agencies identified for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (c) Funds for purchase of aircraft are arranged by Air India partly through internal resource generation and partly by raising loans from the market.

[Translation]

Standard of Education

1851. SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VERMA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the standard of education has deteriorated; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken by the Government to check the declining trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) and (b) There is no standardised touchstone to merit a generalised statement about the decline of educational standards. Standards vary from time to time in all institutions. However, the Government is fully conscious of the need to upgrade the quality and content of education in the various institutions and has been taking up specific programmes in this respect in pursuance of National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. For improvement of primary education Operation Blackboard (OB), Non-Formal Education (NFE) and Teacher Education alongwith District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) are the major centrally sponsored schemes. A number of measures have also been taken to improve content and process of education at all stages. Some of the measures are renewal of curricula, improvement of quality of textbooks, in service training of teachers to improve their professional competence and utilisation of educational technology to bring about improvement in the quality of education. In order to foster quality in technical and higher education, Accreditation Councils have been set up by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and University Grants Commission (UGC).

[English]

Funds to Assam

1852. SHRI KESHAB MAHANTA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) the amount allocated to Assam under Central Road Fund during 1996-97 and the amount earmarked for 1997-98;

(b) the work undertaken by the State Government during 1996-97;

(c) the quantum of funds utilised by the State Government so far and the amount still lying unutilised;

(d) whether the proposals submitted by the State Government have been approved by the Union Government for development of roads in Assam; and

(e) if not, by when the remaining proposals are likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) An amount of Rs. 18 lakhs was allocated under Central Road Fund (CRF) during the year 1996-97 to the State of Assam. It is too early to indicate the allocation for the year 1997-98.

(b) and (c) The responsibility for execution of schemes sanctioned under CRF is the responsibility of the respective State Government and State Governments are expected to monitor the utilisation of funds.